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MAYOR JERRY SANDERS
FACT SHEET

Aguirre's "Toilet to Tap" Plan Slams Ratepayers With Higher Bills for Unwanted Program

$4.5 Billion Plan Requires Double-Digit Rate Increases for Years; Cost Does NOT Include Land Acquisition Costs

The City Attorney's proposal for recycling sewage into drinking water would slam City ratepayers with double digit rate increases for years. The current $4.5 billion price tag could climb significantly because land acquisition costs are not included in this amount. In order to implement his plan, the City would have to purchase land, take other parcels through eminent domain or both. Clearly, this is not a plan that ratepayers can or will want to afford. Because of enormous regulatory hurdles, any plan would a decade or more to implement. Mayor Sanders has also questioned the cost-efficiency of converting sewage into drinking water.

The City Attorney's plan, which has yet to be detailed, would significant raise the sewer fees currently paid by ratepayers as follows:

Current Typical Monthly Sewer Bill For Single Family Residences	**Aguirre's Plan: Typical Monthly Sewer Bill in 2012 For Single Family Residences**
$38.00	$102.50

- Initial estimates show that the City Attorney's proposal would require extraordinary sewage service rate increases for at least the next four years.

- These rate increases would be on top of the rates recently added to sewage bills for long-overdue improvements and upgrades to the sewer system. Under Aguirre's plan, ratepayers would be forced to accept new increases beginning at 37% in the next fiscal year.

Fiscal Year	Aguirre's Plan: Rate Increases
2008-2009	37%
2009-2010	28%
2010-2011	17%
2011-2012	4%

Earlier this year, San Diego ratepayers began paying new rates aimed at improving the City's water and wastewater infrastructure. Those rates will help the City fund $1.4 billion in improvements over the next four years. "I believe that's where ratepayer funds are best spent," said Mayor Sanders.

IMPACTS OF AGUIRRE'S PLAN MAY INCLUDE EMINENT DOMAIN

Aguirre's plan would require the City to construct treatment facilities to handle the massive volume of sewage required to make the plan work. Because there is no room to build these facilities at the Point Loma treatment plant, the City would need to acquire land in some neighborhoods away from the plant. The costs and regulatory hurdles for finding suitable land are not included in the initial $4.5 billion cost estimate for Aguirre's plan.

Aguirre's plan is also contingent on reservoir space that may not be available during wet weather years. Under Aguirre's plan, the City would potentially need to build more reservoirs – a process that could take decades under current regulatory conditions – or to pump excess water back through the Point Loma sewage outfall eliminating possible benefits that might come under the $4.5 billion scheme.

"We simply don't have any available land for new treatment plants or reservoirs in the City," said the Mayor. "That means that the City may be forced to consider eminent domain proceedings to take land from owners that may not want to sell us their property," said the Mayor. "Without space for the plants or reservoirs we run the risk that we'll just end up pumping it right back into the ocean. That's the kind of detail missing from Mr. Aguirre's rhetoric on this issue," he said.

MAYOR QUESTIONS COST EFFICIENCY OF "TOILET TO TAP" SCHEME

Indirect potable reuse is not a silver bullet to fix all of the region's water needs. Any plan, and especially the City Attorney's ambitious one, would decade a decade or more to implement.

Even if both of the City's plants were operating at full capacity and the maximum amount of water was being reused, it would only make up a little over 5% if the region's water supply.

The price points on recycled water for use in reservoir augmentation continue to be much higher than any other type of water as follows:

Cost Comparison of Water (cost per Acre Foot)	
	Cost to City
Indirect Potable Reuse[1]	$1,882*
Desalinated Water[2]	$1,400*
Raw Water [3]	$515
Potable Water [3]	$679

1 Source: Water Reuse Study, March 2006 – Indirect Potable Reuse costs are the combination of Advanced Treated Water and Tertiary Treatment (planning level numbers)

2 Cost estimates were extrapolated from SDCWA 2003 estimates

3 Source: San Diego County Water Authority budget document, Effective January 1, 2008

* Does not include eligible incentives or credits